



FEMA

Beach Improves Municipal Structures Retrofitting to Resist Hurricane Damage

Surfside Beach, SC - At only a half a mile from the beach and 25 feet above sea level, the most critical government buildings in Surfside Beach have always been in grave danger during hurricanes.

However, on August 14 and 15 of this year, when Hurricane Charley made landfall near Surfside Beach, those buildings sustained no damage.

Wind gusts were recorded at over 90 mph, but the Town hall, Civic Center, Public Safety Department, Rescue Squad, and the Public Works buildings were not harmed. "The eye of the storm went directly over Surfside Beach," said Jan Lewis, Executive Assistant for the Town. "While the hurricane was a minimal Category 1, the effects were felt with gusts approaching 100 mph resulting in trees being uprooted, power lines down and other measurable debris."

These buildings house many critical functions during all aspects of storm encounters so in August of 2001, the town of Surfside Beach applied to the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) for a hazard mitigation grant in the amount of \$126,143. The grant was approved with 75 percent being funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The purpose of the grant was to secure the weak areas and increase the strength of town government structures, thereby reducing the loss of equipment, and most importantly, the loss of life. During tourist season, the population can reach 35,000.

The mitigation project was completed in August of 2002 and included retrofitting eight critical facilities with storm shutters to protect window openings, hardening roof structures to withstand hurricane wind forces, providing additional wall strengthening, hardening overhead doors to protect against the impact of flying debris, and providing stiffening to horizontal supports (bar joists) where needed.

These facilities would definitely have been vulnerable to damage from Hurricane Charley's wind speeds if mitigation had not been performed. "Protecting critical facilities is important, especially in coastal areas at risk from hurricanes," said Shawn Putnam, State Hazard Mitigation Officer. "This project is a great example of how mitigation can help a community recover quickly from a disaster."



Horry County,
South Carolina



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$126,143.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Retrofitting, Structural

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)